

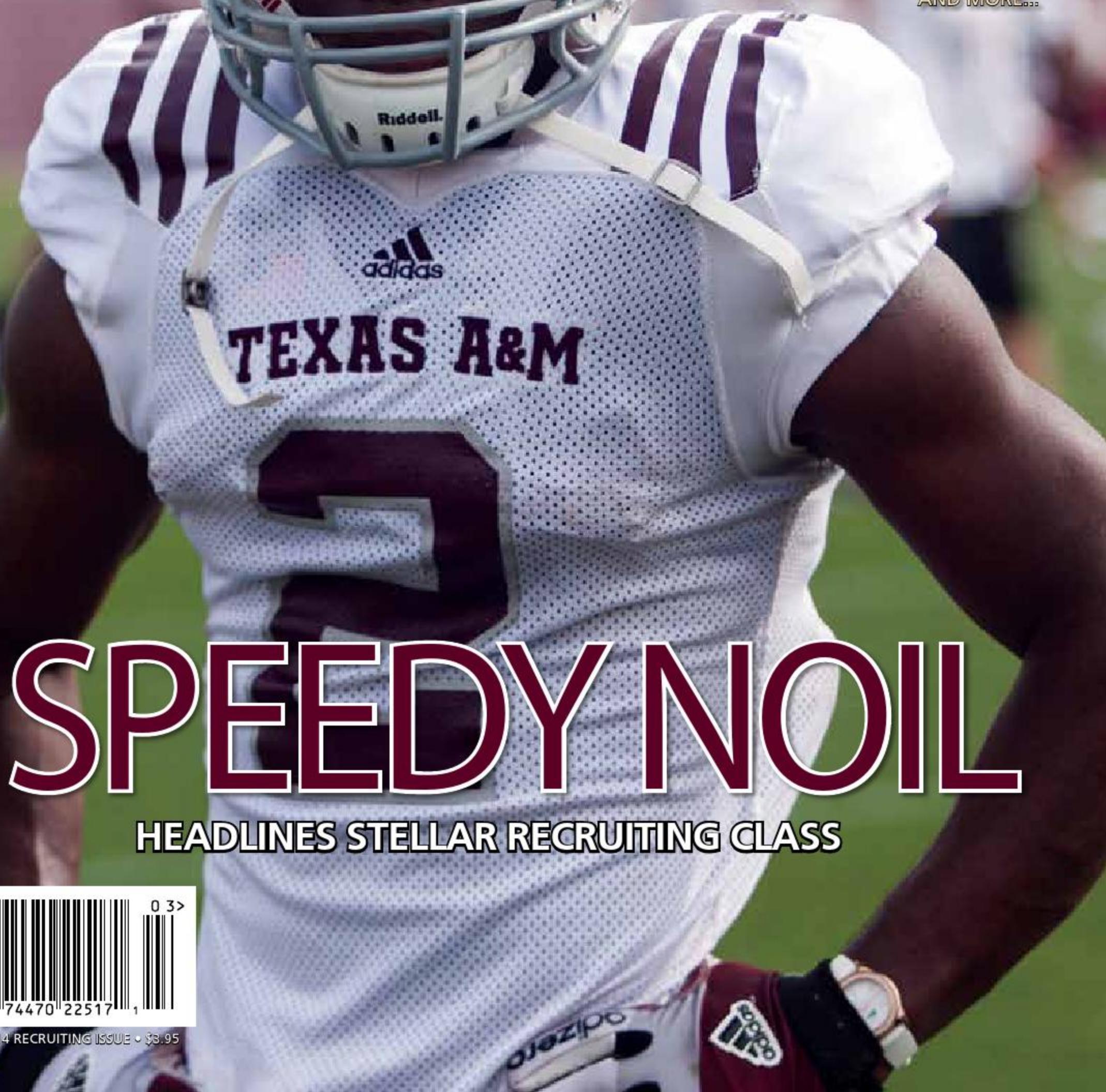
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On the Cover: Speedy Nol headlines stellar recruiting class. Photo by Rob Havens '88.



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Howdy Ags!

There is nothing like the first day of spring football. For the coaches who have been traveling around the country recruiting, it's their first opportunity to hit the field and officially start working on next season. For the team, it has only been a short time since they were standing in the middle of the Georgia Dome as the confetti dropped in celebration of a victory over the Duke Blue Devils. After a short break, the Aggies focused on conditioning and getting stronger for next year's campaign. It was their time to hit the field and start trying to earn playing time and show the coaches what they can do. Fans are anxious to see what this team will be like, post Johnny Manziel, and to see who will step up and fill the shoes of Aggie players that have moved on.

Whoever decided to start spring football on February 28th—the earliest of all SEC teams—should get an "A" in marketing. As I woke up that morning and watched Sports Center, it looked like ESPN had become the Aggie Network. For basically half of the show, they were talking about Texas A&M or Johnny Manziel. It was like having our very own recruiting show. Very smart!

As I watched the guys run out onto the practice field for the first time, I got really excited to see what these guys will do this year. Inside this issue you will find the consensus top five nationally ranked recruiting class that Coach Sumlin and his staff have assembled for 2014. As I watched mid-term enrollees like Kyle Allen and Speedy Noil, I couldn't help but be impressed with the direction that our program is going. The speed and athleticism of our current roster is pretty special, and the competition was fierce this spring. Our depth was better and our coaches will have more options moving forward. The countdown to the 2014 season has begun, and it should be a lot of fun watching this group this fall!

Gig'em Ags!

Rob '88



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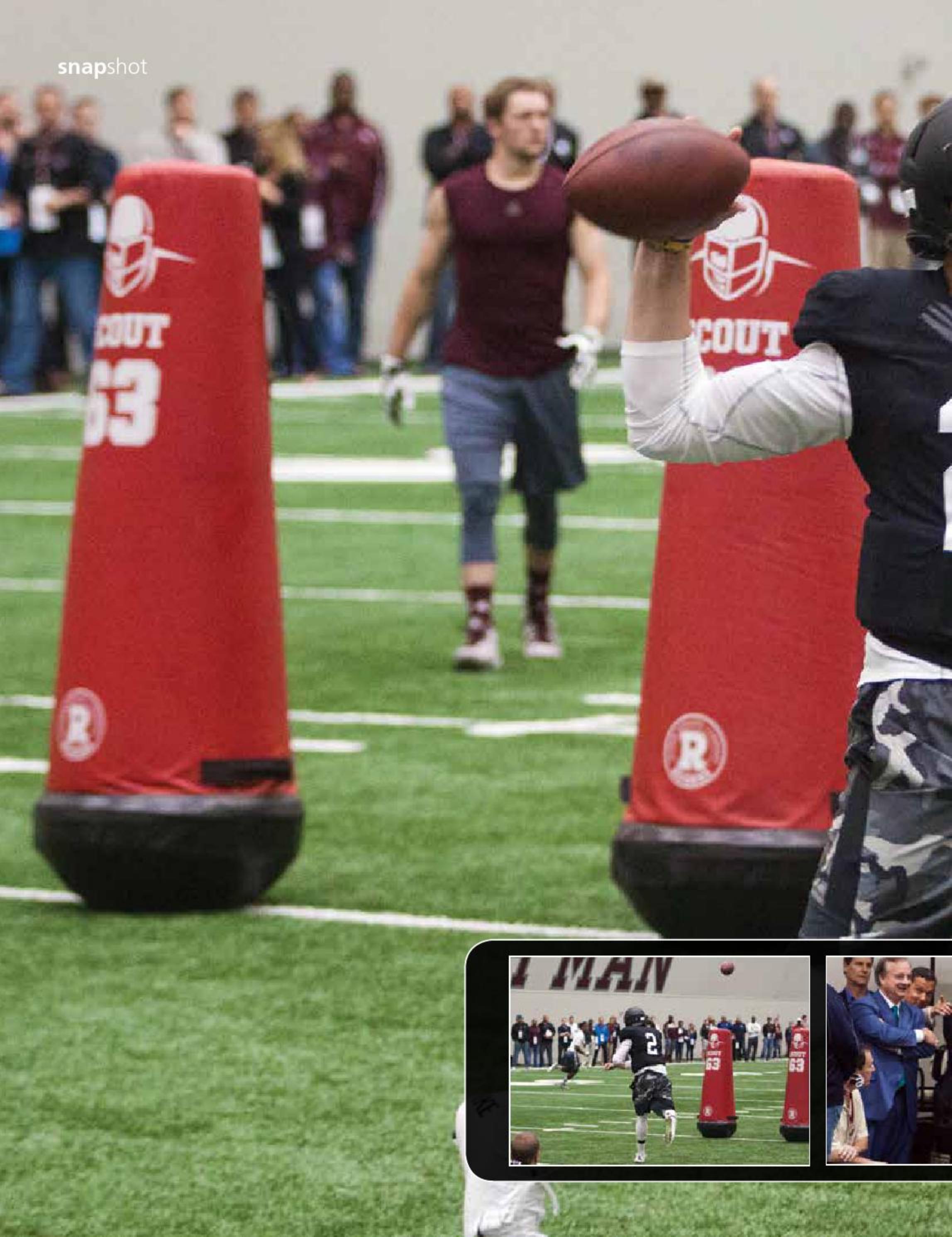
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snapshot





johnny day

Manziel performed in front of seventy-five officials from thirty NFL teams, including head coaches and GMs, his teammates and coaches, and over two-hundred media members at his personal pro day. Former President George H.W. Bush and wife Barbara also stopped by to watch Johnny amaze onlookers by completing sixty-one of sixty-three passes thrown. The NFL Draft begins May 8th.

Photos by Rob Havens '88.

snapshot





back splash

The Aggie Women's Swimming & Diving Team wrapped up the '14 season with a team best fourth place finish at the NCAA Championships. The ladies won three individual titles, which was the most ever at a single NCAA meet. Cammile Adams won the 200 butterfly, Breeja Larson took the 100 breast stroke, and Paige Miller won the 100 back.

Photo by Sarah Pyatt '14.

snapshot





special edition

Former student Charlie Shaver, who is the Chairman and CEO of Axalta Coating Systems (the primary sponsor of Jeff Gordon's #24 NASCAR) set up a special Aggie paint job, complete with A&M and Texas A&M Engineering logos, for the car to race in the Duck Commander 500 at Texas Motor Speedway on April 7th. Gordon showcased the car on campus days before the race. The car was amazing on race day, and Gordon led for several laps before coming up just short on the final lap to place second. Photo by Rob Havens '88.

snapshot





walk-off winner

Cole Lankford trots toward first base after hitting a game winning single with the bases loaded to knock off the #5 LSU Tigers. With the game tied 2-2 in the ninth, the Aggies loaded the bases. The Tigers countered by bringing in a fifth infielder, setting up Lankford's late-game heroics. Cole's walk-off single set off a wild celebration on the field and in the stands. The Ags went on to take the series two games to one.

Photo by Rob Havens '88.



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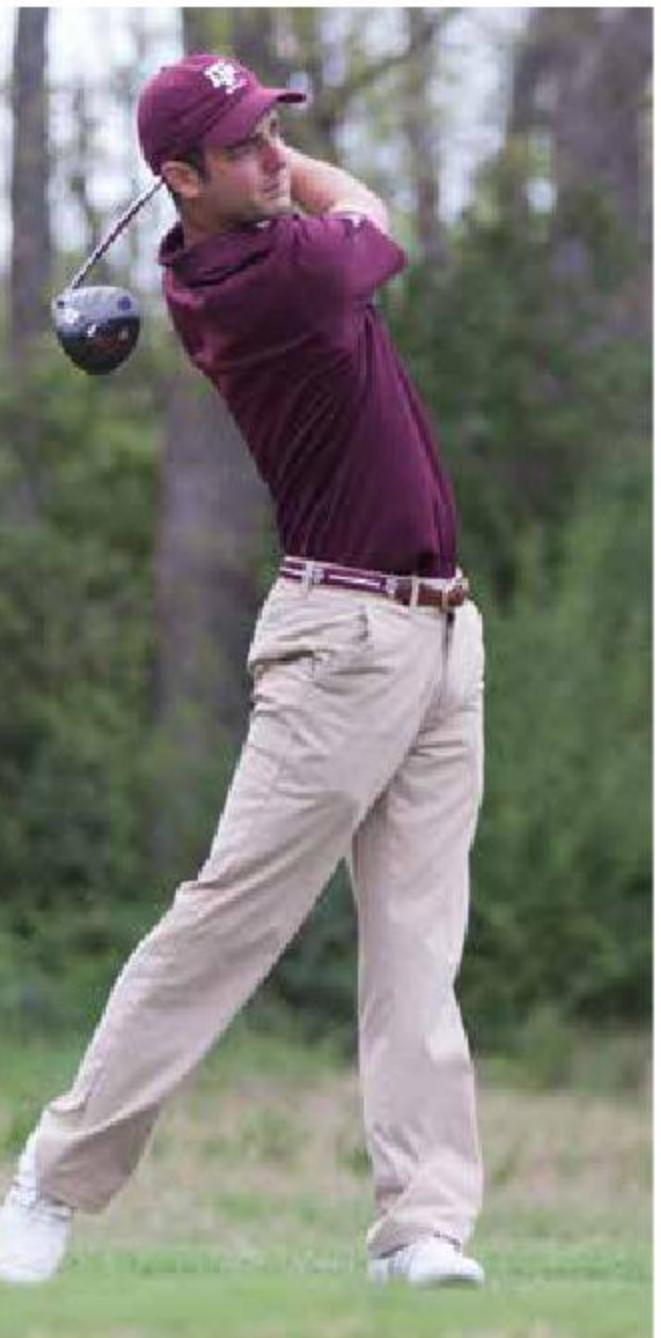


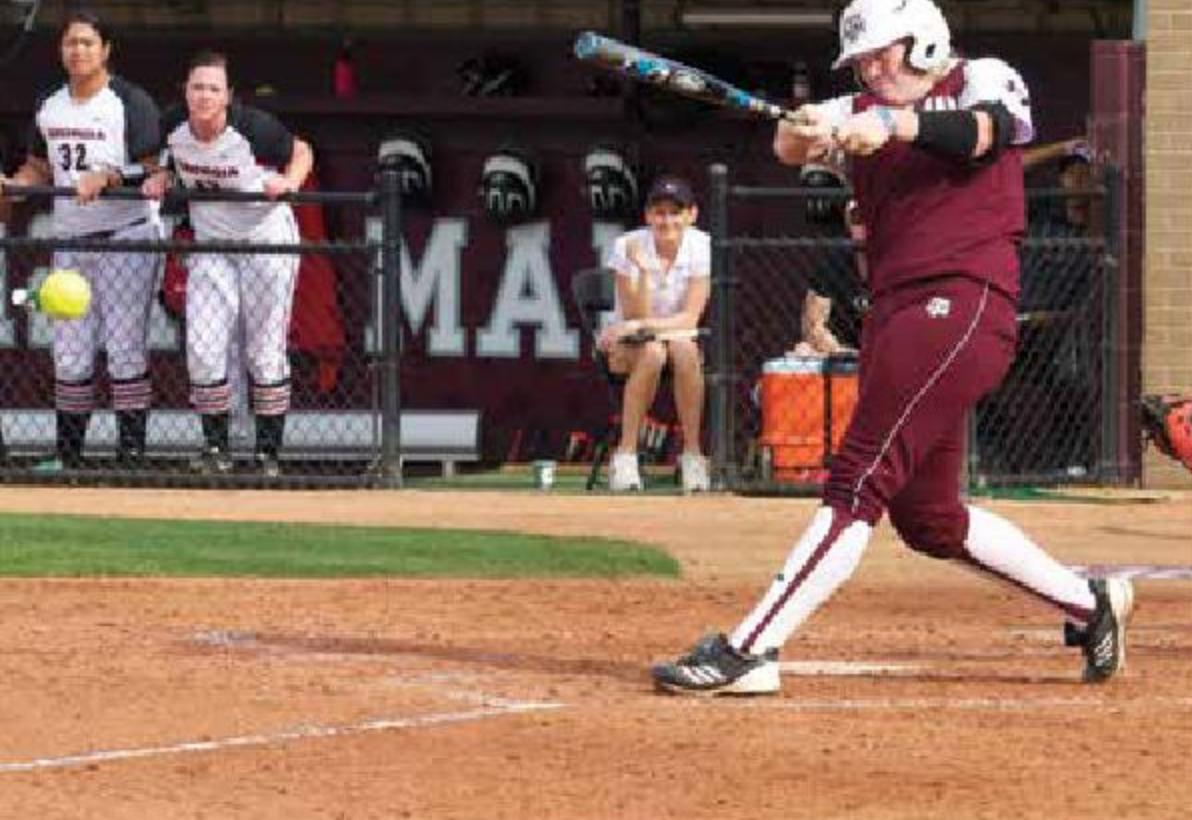
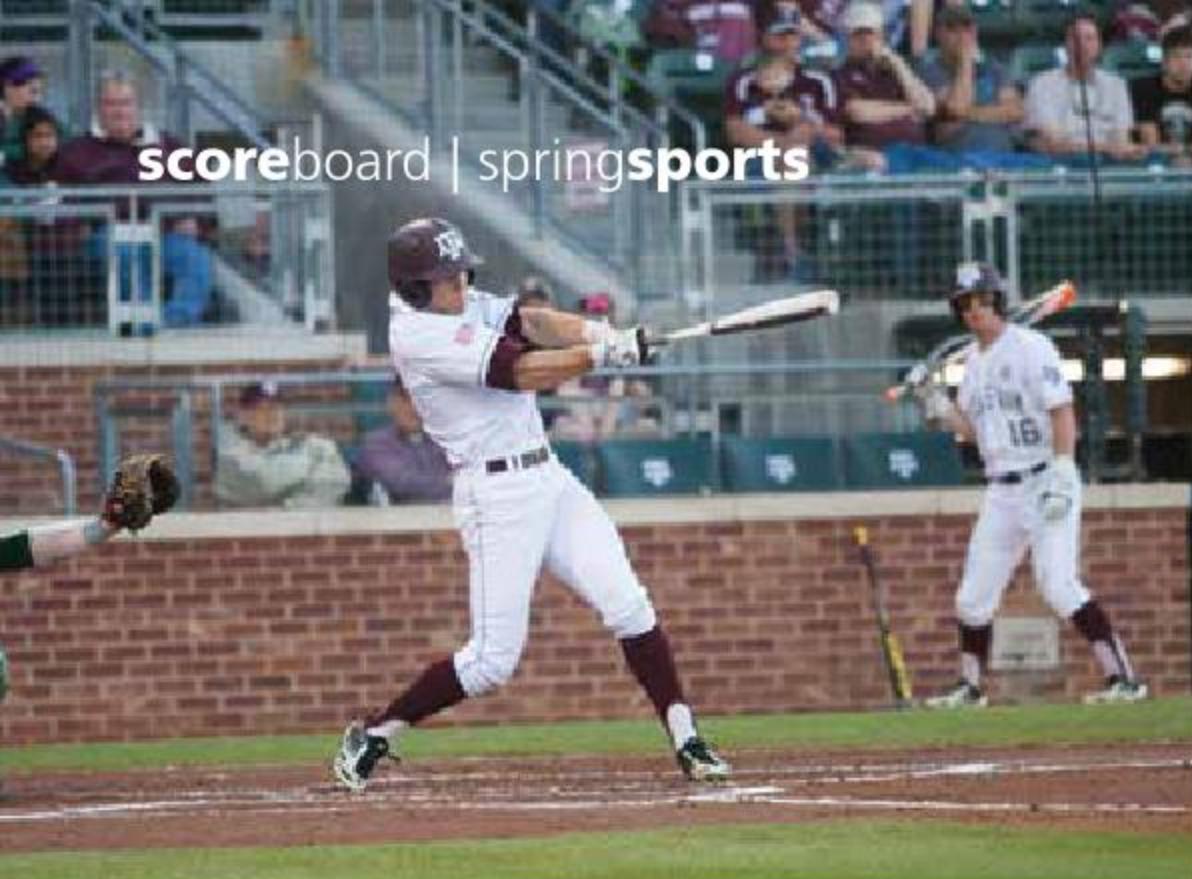
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men's golf: The men competed in cold and rainy conditions on the final day but were able to battle from behind to tie the LSU club for a share of the 2014 Aggie Invitational. Junior Greg Yates carded an impressive 69 to lead the team on Sunday, shooting a bogey-free 32 on the final nine holes of the tournament.

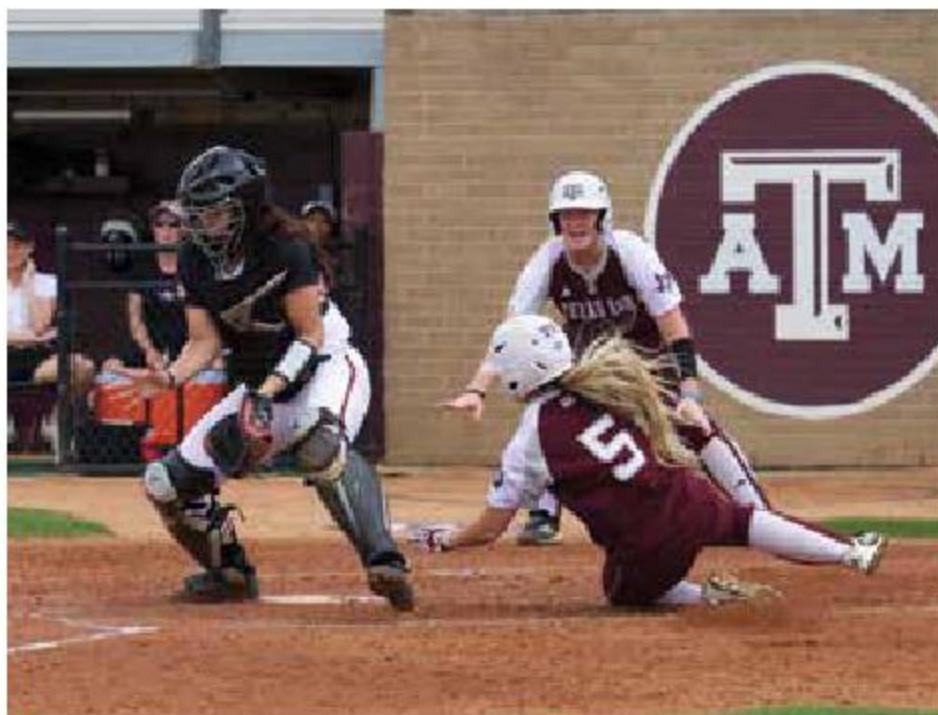
men's basketball: The Aggies finished their 13-14 season by coming up just short in the second round of the College Basketball Invitational. The tournament provided post-season experience for the players that will be returning next season. The program bids farewell to seniors Fabyon Harris, Blake McDonald and Payton Carrell. Since wrapping up the season, the Aggies have received commitments from Peyton Allen, a 6'5" guard from Chatham, Illinois, and 5'11" point guard Avery Johnson, Jr. from Plano, Texas.





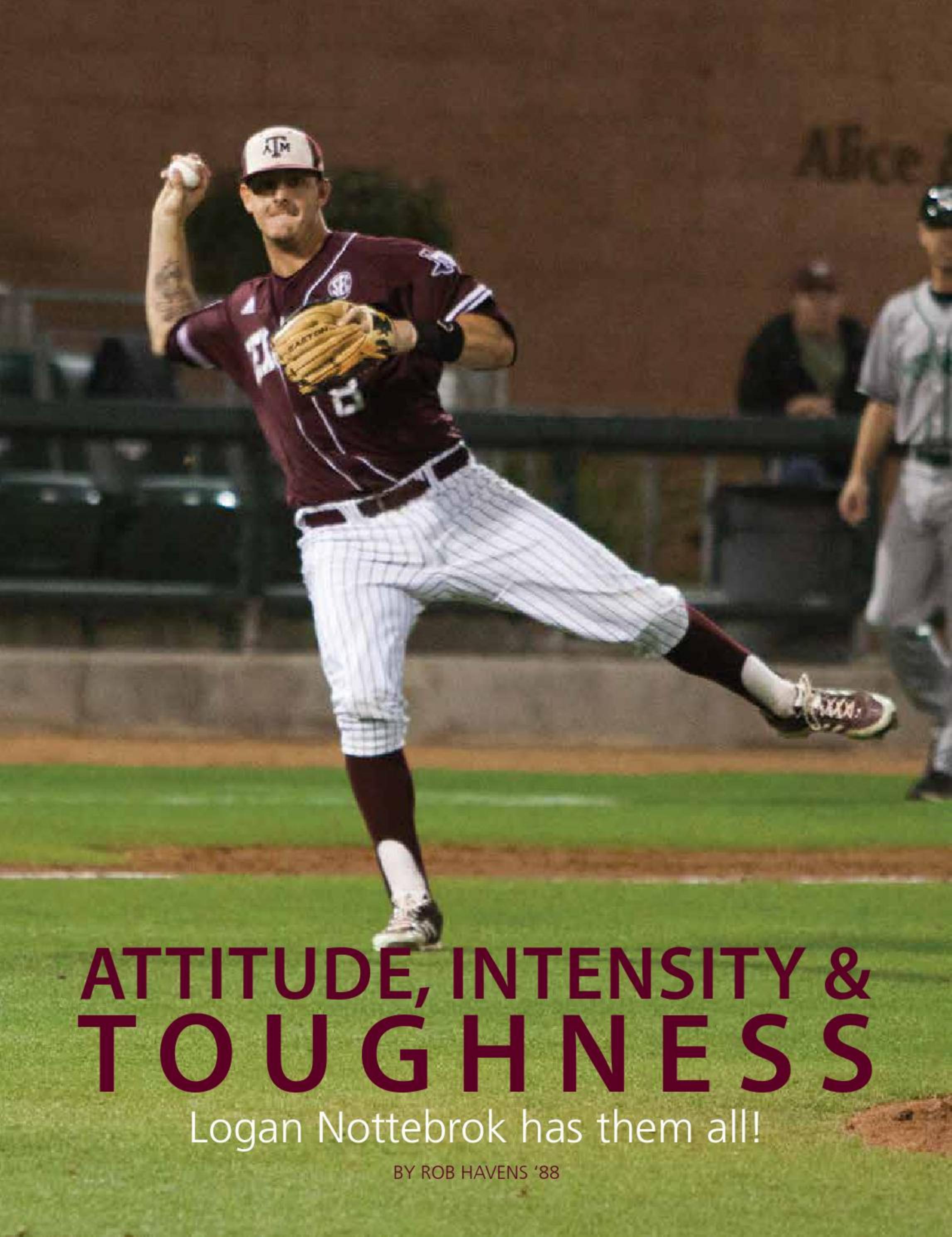
baseball: The men have battled through a gauntlet of teams in the '14 season, facing the nation's best every weekend while also competing against top ranked non-conference foes. A trip to Nashville to face the number seven Commodores of Vanderbilt might have been the launching pad this team needed as Coach Childress changed up the pitching rotation and the Ags took two of three from one of the best teams in the conference and the nation on the road. Cole Lankford continues to lead the team at the plate, while Grayson Long and Tyler Stubblefield lead on the mound. The team hopes to finish the season on a roll and earn a trip to Omaha.

softball: The women are fighting every day through their tough SEC schedule. On Friday, April 11th, the Ags earned coach Evans her 700th win of her Aggie career as they shut down the high powered offense of the number four Tennessee Volunteers and won 4-1 at the Aggie Softball Complex. Emily Albus is batting over .400 and leads the team at the plate, while Rachel Fox and Katie Marks have been the mainstays for the Aggies in the circle. The Ags wrap up the regular season on May 3rd and hope to generate momentum for a run through the SEC and NCAA tourneys.





men's tennis: The number eleven men's team wrapped up the regular season with a 21-6 record, including a 10-2 count in SEC play, securing a number two seed in the SEC tournament. In ITA singles rankings for the final week of the regular season, three Aggies are listed: Harrison Adams, #14; Shane Vinsant, #23; and Jeremy Efferding, #57. The men's team defeated number fifteen Florida to win the 2014 SEC Men's Tennis Championship. Trailing in four of the six singles matches, the Aggies battled back and took the event 4-2 to bring home the championship hardware. **track and Field:** This year the Aggies hosted the SEC Indoor Track and Field Championships for the first time. The women were poised to win the team championship after a second place finish in the 4x400 relay but were disqualified after an official claimed an Aggie impeded a Gator during the anchor leg of the race. Consequently, the ladies finished in second place. Kamaria Brown scored a historic double victory in the 200- and 400-meter races. The Aggie men were third on the podium in team competition and set a collegiate record of 3:03.20 in the men's 4x400 relay, which highlighted the final day of the meet. **women's basketball:** The Aggies had an impressive run through the NCAA tournament before falling to eventual national champion UConn in the regional final. The ladies cruised through the first two rounds, defeating North Dakota 70-55 and James Madison 85-69 to advance to the Sweet 16. Courtney Walker scored twenty-five points to propel the Aggies past DePaul 84-65 and to the Elite 8. Facing the undefeated Huskies, the Aggies fought gallantly, producing the second closest game of the year for UConn in a 69-54 decision. The Aggies finished tenth in the final poll and said goodbye to Karla Gilbert, Kristen Grant and Christina Sanchez-Quintanar. **women's tennis:** The eighth-ranked Texas A&M women finished the regular season with an impressive (17-5, 10-3 SEC) record. The SEC is loaded this year, but the Aggies have been ranked in the top eleven since the rankings started on January 2nd. The Ags wrapped up the regular season winning four out of five matches. Senior Christina Stancu earned a career high singles ranking of eight in the final week, making her the second highest ranked individual in A&M history. The Aggies hope to continue their post-season success from last year and make a run at the national championship.



ATTITUDE, INTENSITY & TOUGHNESS

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BY ROB HAVENS '88

Tell me about growing up, when you became interested in A&M, and the two schools you went to before A&M.

Well, to be honest with you, growing up it was mainly football and baseball for me. When it comes to A&M, one of my older sisters went here, but it was never really in the picture for me. I went to high school in San Antonio and played four years of football and four years of baseball. A&M never recruited me out of high school, never talked to them. After that I went to A&M Corpus Christi. Went there for two years. First year, I played baseball and then I got kicked off the team for grades. I had grade issues. Sat out a whole year of baseball. Never picked up a bat, didn't pick up a ball. Then, randomly, one day working, I got a call from a junior college coach asking me if I could come try out for his team. Said yeah, sure, why not? Went and tried out, offered me a full ride right on the spot. Then had one of the best years that I've ever had. That was last year, after not playing a whole year. Then, luckily, at the end of the year, these guys recruited me to come here to come play baseball again, so it's been a journey for me.

Did the coach just know you from high school?

Couldn't tell you. I had no idea. I was playing against Cisco, actually against Patrick McLendon. I had a really good series against them and I was going into the bathroom and Coach Sealy was walking out of the bathroom, and he had talked to me and gave me his number and said, "We'll be in touch." Then later on in the year, we kind of chit-chatted a little bit, but nothing really like 'oh they're interested in me.' The very end of the year when I was trying to figure out where I was going to go, it was between here and Texas State. At one point, it was more Texas State than here. Then, all of a sudden, they called me one day and said, "Hey, we want to get you here on a recruiting trip." Pretty much blew—well, I don't want to say blew Texas State off—but at A&M Corpus you always hear about the Texas' and the Texas A&M's and the community here, how great it is, and you don't really experience it until you get here. Then, when I got here on my recruiting trip, you walk down the wall

and you see all the cool pictures of all the guys. Some of those guys I know personally. Cliff Pennington, he was a family friend of mine in Corpus Christi. So it just felt like home for me here. It was a good place to pick.

As far as baseball, are there any Aggie baseball traditions that you really like?

To be honest with you, I like it all. They have a saying: 'attitude, approach, intensity, and toughness' here. I haven't had that in any other college. They really abide by that. If you don't do it, they're going to let you know real quick. They just want you to give a 110 percent all the time. If you make errors, it's going to happen. They want you diving for balls, they want you running through the bag as hard as you can, even if you're out. On pop-ups, they want you at third base before that thing lands in the glove. I think that's something special. I don't think a lot of coaches take pride in that. Their expectations of you when you come in here from day one was just like, this is real, we have a plan. If you aren't on train with this plan, there's the door, get out. That's something that I take a lot of pride in. That's awesome to feel whenever you're a player.

If you had a choice of making a great defensive play or making a big hit, which do you prefer?

My gut feeling wants to say the big hit, like walk-off homeruns; those are awesome. But me, I take a lot of pride in my defense. I'm a bigger guy, so I don't move like Logan Taylor or Blake Allemand or Patrick McLendon, so I need all the help I can get. Making two diving plays in the opening week, that was more important to me than the walk-off homeruns or the big hits. Even though on one of them I didn't get the guy out. Just walking in the dugout, all the guys are like, "Geez, how did you catch that?" That's a better feeling than the walk-off home runs.

So far, what's your favorite tradition at A&M?

I'm going to have to go with the war hymn. When you're on the field in the 9th inning and it comes on, and you see the war hymn, and the whole stands are

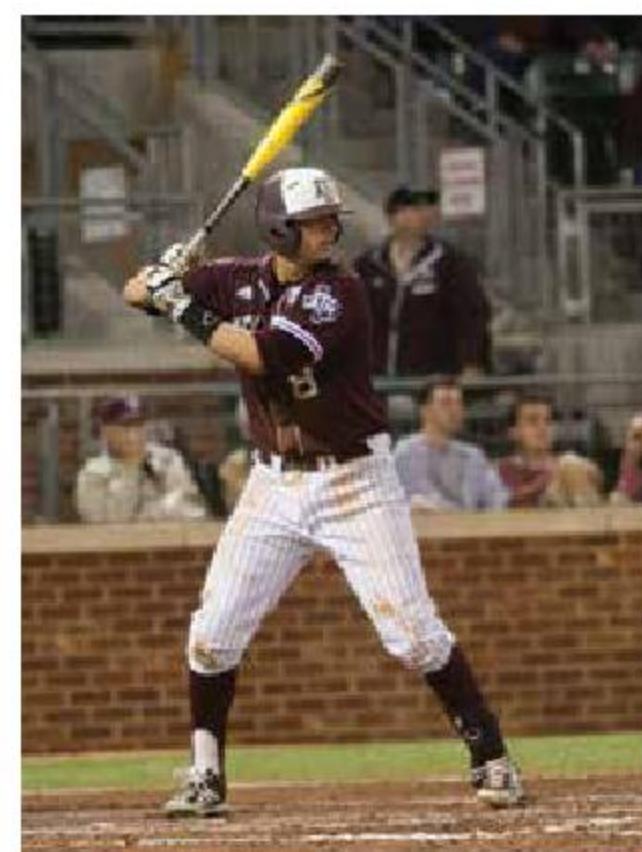
going opposite ways, you don't realize how cool it is. It was an eye opener. Definitely put that deep down in my heart 'cause that's something we should take pride in. Not a lot of people do that stuff.

What's your favorite thing about being an Aggie?

I would just say the Aggie family, the Aggie network in general. I go home to San Antonio and I'll wear an Aggie baseball shirt, and three little kids will run up to you in the restaurant and ask you for your autograph, and you've never seen them in your life. Just 'cause they see your shirt, and they ask you if you play, and I'm like, 'yeah,' they will ask, "Can I have your autograph?" Everyone just wants to be a part of it. To me, there's something different about here than anywhere else. I feel like everybody here has so much more respect for you. People really treat you with respect here. At least that's what I've gotten out of it. I haven't had one rude comment to me. I'd just say that's the Aggie network, people know you, the family.

Have you heard the fans up in the stands now when you get up to bat?

Yeah, I think they say, 'let's get naughty.' They get pretty loud. Especially in that stadium, it feels like they're just right on top of you. Every little word, you can pretty much hear. It's pretty unique—haven't had that one.





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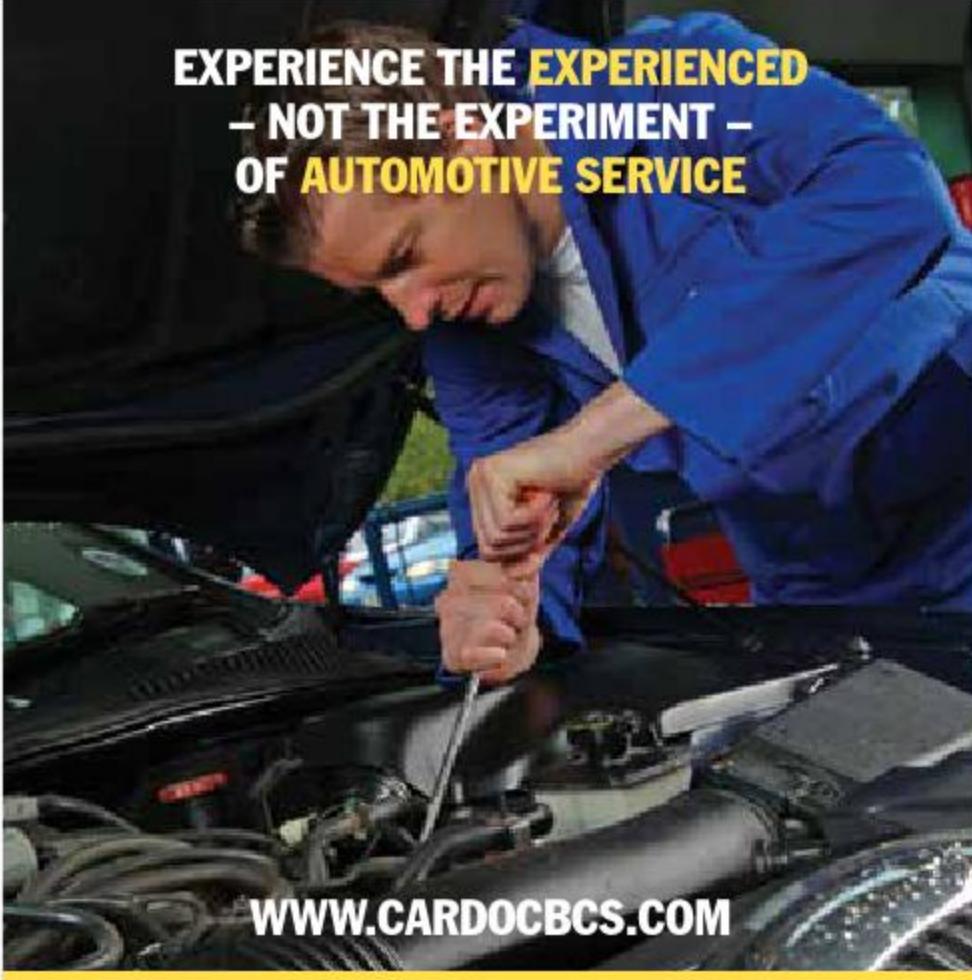
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ZACH LEDWIK (OL)
La Grange HS

Otaro Alaka

POSITION LB **HEIGHT** 6'3" **WEIGHT** 210
HIGH SCHOOL Cypress Falls **HOMETOWN** Houston, TX

SUPERLATIVES Two-time first-team linebacker **CHOSE A&M OVER** Texas, Florida State, LSU, Michigan, Oklahoma

Alaka is a fundamentally sound defender with impressive skills. Makes plays all over the field and is comfortable playing in space.

Kyle Allen

POSITION QB **HEIGHT** 6'3" **WEIGHT** 200
HIGH SCHOOL Desert Mountain **HOMETOWN** Scottsdale, AZ

SUPERLATIVES Rated No. 1 QB prospect in the country, threw for more than 8000 yards and 86 touchdowns in HS **CHOSE A&M OVER** Alabama, UCLA, Notre Dame, Oklahoma State, Arizona State

Allen is a strong-armed quarterback with excellent mobility and pocket awareness. Enrolled at Texas A&M in January and will go through spring drills with the Aggies.

Cedric Collins

POSITION DB **HEIGHT** 5'10" **WEIGHT** 165
HIGH SCHOOL Skyline **HOMETOWN** Dallas, TX

SUPERLATIVES District Newcomer of the Year as a freshman, earned first-team all-district honors as a Sophomore and Junior **CHOSE A&M OVER** Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Ole Miss, Nebraska

Collins has elite pass coverage skills and football savvy.

Qualen Cunningham

POSITION DE **HEIGHT** 6'3" **WEIGHT** 220
HIGH SCHOOL Hamilton **HOMETOWN** Chandler, AZ

SUPERLATIVES Division I First Team All-State, First Team All-Arizona, Semper Fidelis All-American **CHOSE A&M OVER** Michigan State, Oregon, USC, Arizona State, Oklahoma

Cunningham is a long-armed defensive end with impressive pass rushing skills. Very quick burst off the edge. Able to change directions.

TOP 5 CLASS

Breaking Down the 2014 Recruiting Class

BY ROB HAVENS '88



Myles Garrett (DE)
Martin HS



Speedy Noil (WR)
Edna Karr HS



Kyle Allen (QB)
Desert Mountain HS



STACKING IT UP
How the Ags' 2014
recruiting class ranks
in the SEC



Tank Davis

POSITION OL **HEIGHT** 6'4" **WEIGHT** 265
HIGH SCHOOL Lakeview Centennial
HOMETOWN Garland, TX

SUPERLATIVES 5A Region II First Team Elite Team, 11-5A First Team All-District **CHOSE A&M OVER** Oregon, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State

Davis is an athletic offensive tackle prospect with long arms and quick feet. Has a tremendous frame to build upon. Very quick and fundamentally sound as a blocker.

Jermaine Eluemunor

POSITION OL **HEIGHT** 6'4" **WEIGHT** 315
HIGH SCHOOL Morris Knolls HS / Lackawanna College (Pa.) **HOMETOWN** Denville, N.J.

SUPERLATIVES All-Northeast Conference Second Team **CHOSE A&M OVER** Alabama, Florida State, Ohio State, UCLA, Arkansas

Eluemunor is a versatile offensive lineman and capable of playing guard or tackle. Extremely powerful with a quick burst. Excels as a run-blocker. Originally from England, has been playing American football for only a few years. Enrolled at Texas A&M in January and will go through spring drills with the Aggies.

Myles Garrett

POSITION DE **HEIGHT** 6'5" **WEIGHT** 250
HIGH SCHOOL Martin **HOMETOWN** Arlington, TX

SUPERLATIVES Rated the top defensive end prospect in the nation, All-State, All-American, 5A Defensive Player of the Year **CHOSE A&M OVER** Texas, Alabama, Michigan, Miami, Ohio State

Garrett is a very mature physically for his age and could make a quick transition to the college level. Shows tremendous quickness off the edge, but also has the strength to hold up against the run.

Avery Gennesy

POSITION OL **HEIGHT** 6'5" **WEIGHT** 310
HIGH SCHOOL Southhaven HS / East Mississippi CC **HOMETOWN** Southhaven, MS

SUPERLATIVES NJCAA First Team All-American **CHOSE A&M OVER** Ole Miss, Tennessee, Ohio State, Georgia, Oklahoma

Gennesy is a dominating tackle that anchored the offensive front for the 2013 NJCC East Mississippi CC Lions. Enrolled at Texas A&M in January and will go through spring drills with the Aggies.

JJ Gustafson

POSITION OL **HEIGHT** 6'5" **WEIGHT** 275
HIGH SCHOOL Dallas Jesuit **HOMETOWN** Dallas, TX

SUPERLATIVES First Team All-District, 5A All-Region II First Team **CHOSE A&M OVER** Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas Tech, Stanford

Gustafson joined the team in January after signing with last year's freshman class. Considered one of the top offensive tackles in the state of Texas. Has quick feet, excellent balance, and is a fundamentally sound blocker.

Nick Harvey

POSITION DB **HEIGHT** 5'10" **WEIGHT** 180
HIGH SCHOOL Travis **HOMETOWN** Richmond, TX

SUPERLATIVES 4A First Team All-State, 5A First Team All-District, US Army All-American **CHOSE A&M OVER** Texas, LSU, Notre Dame, Oklahoma, Arkansas

Harvey is a dynamic and athletic cornerback with elite pass coverage skills. Speed allows him to make plays all over the field. Big hitter with sure tackling skills.

Zaycoven Henderson

POSITION DT HEIGHT 6'1" WEIGHT 310
HIGH SCHOOL Longview **HOMETOWN**
Longview, TX

SUPERLATIVES 5A First Team All-District, 5A Region II First Team Elite Team **CHOSE A&M OVER** Texas, Oklahoma, Texas Tech, Ole Miss

Henderson is an impressive blend of strength and speed. Intelligent player who loves spending time in the film room. Enrolled at Texas A&M in January and will go through spring drills with the Aggies.

Frank Iheanacho

POSITION WR HEIGHT 6'6" WEIGHT 220
HIGH SCHOOL Westside **HOMETOWN**
Houston, TX

SUPERLATIVES 5A First Team All-District, US Army All-American **CHOSE A&M OVER** Florida State, Oregon, LSU, Michigan State, Missouri

Iheanacho is a tall receiver that creates mismatches against smaller defensive backs. Uses his body well to create space. Fluid runner with excellent hands. Great leaper.

Jamal Jeffery

POSITION WR HEIGHT 5'9" WEIGHT 175
HIGH SCHOOL Lufkin **HOMETOWN**
Lufkin, TX

SUPERLATIVES 5A Second Team All-District **CHOSE A&M OVER** Texas Tech, Missouri, Oklahoma State

Jeffery is an extremely explosive slot receiver prospect. Has true breakaway speed. Dynamic open field runner with great vision. Has the innate ability to make defenders miss.

Jerrett Johnson

POSITION DE HEIGHT 6'3" WEIGHT 240
HIGH SCHOOL Seven Lakes **HOMETOWN**
Katy, TX

SUPERLATIVES District Defensive Player of the Year **CHOSE A&M OVER** Texas, Missouri, Oklahoma

Johnson is a hard-charging defensive end who excelled inside and coming off the edge. Relentless defender makes plays all over the field. Long arms allow him to impact many plays.

Zach Ledwik

POSITION OL HEIGHT 6'5" WEIGHT 270
HIGH SCHOOL La Grange **HOMETOWN**
La Grange, TX

SUPERLATIVES 3A First Team All-State, ranked No.2 in his HS class **CHOSE A&M OVER** Nebraska, Texas, Texas Tech, Baylor, Arizona State

Ledwik is big and athletic. He can play a variety of positions on the offensive line. Very quick with good feet and balance. Strong student. Was the cornerstone of the Leopard offensive front.

Koda Martin

POSITION OL HEIGHT 6'6" WEIGHT 275
HIGH SCHOOL Manvel **HOMETOWN**
Manvel, TX

SUPERLATIVES Two-time All-State Defensive End **CHOSE A&M OVER** Texas, Florida State, Alabama, LSU, Stanford

Martin lined up at tight end and defensive end in HS, but was recruited to Texas A&M as an offensive lineman. Powerful and tall. Has long arms and nimble feet.



Jamal Jeffery (WR)
Lufkin HS



Speedy Noil

POSITION WR **HEIGHT** 5'11" **WEIGHT** 190
HIGH SCHOOL Edna Karr **HOMETOWN**
New Orleans, LA

SUPERLATIVES Rated the nation's No. 1 prospect as an "athlete" **CHOOSE A&M OVER** LSU, Texas, Auburn, Florida State, Alabama

Noil is one of the top players in the state of Louisiana and the nation. Possesses blistering speed and the innate ability to make defenders miss.

Josh Reynolds

POSITION WR **HEIGHT** 6'4" **WEIGHT** 190
HIGH SCHOOL Jay HS / Tyler JC
HOMETOWN San Antonio, TX

SUPERLATIVES 5A First Team All-District, Second Team All-Conference at Tyler JC **CHOOSE A&M OVER** Baylor, Oregon State, TCU

Reynolds is a tall, rangy receiver with excellent speed and toughness. Runs excellent routes and creates mismatches with smaller defensive backs. Uses his body extremely well to create space. Enrolled at Texas A&M in January and will go through spring drills with the Aggies.

Josh Walker

POSITION LB **HEIGHT** 6'1" **WEIGHT** 220
HIGH SCHOOL Gilmer **HOMETOWN**
Gilmer, TX

SUPERLATIVES 3A All-State Honorable Mention, 3A Co-Defensive MVP, US Army All-American **CHOOSE A&M OVER** Texas, Oklahoma, Texas Tech

Walker is an extremely fast linebacker with sideline-to-sideline playmaking skills. Relentless defender with the ability to get to the QB. Very strong and fundamentally sound. Dangerous playmaker off the edge.

Deshawn Washington

POSITION DT **HEIGHT** 6'3" **WEIGHT** 285
HIGH SCHOOL Nederland **HOMETOWN**
Nederland, TX

SUPERLATIVES Rated the state's top defensive tackle, All-American, Defensive MVP **CHOOSE A&M OVER** Texas, Oklahoma, Texas Tech

Washington is an extremely physical defender that consistently beat double-team blocking. Gets upfield extremely fast with a quick-burst first step. Very quick for his size and makes plays all over the field.

Armani Watts

POSITION DB **HEIGHT** 5'11" **WEIGHT** 175
HIGH SCHOOL North Forney **HOMETOWN**
Forney, TX

SUPERLATIVES 4A First Team All-State, First Team All-Area, First Team All-District, First Team All-Texas HS Team **CHOOSE A&M OVER** Clemson, Oklahoma, Arizona State, Nebraska, Oklahoma State

Watts is a versatile player that earned all-district honors on offensive, defense, and special teams. Pure play-maker wherever he lines up. Very dangerous with the ball in his hands whether as a receiver, defender, or return man.

Donovan Wilson

POSITION DB **HEIGHT** 6'1" **WEIGHT** 185
HIGH SCHOOL Woodlawn **HOMETOWN**
Shreveport, LA

SUPERLATIVES All-City Defensive Player of the Year **CHOOSE A&M OVER** TCU, Utah

Wilson is a ball-hawking safety that led the Shreveport area with a whopping 13 pickoffs as a Senior. Tremendous body control and anticipation allows him to win the battle for the football when it's in the air.



Frank Iheanacho (WR)
Westside HS



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CALI LANPHEAR

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BY ROB HAVENS '88

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Tell me about being recruited to come to A&M. Did you grow up in Montgomery?

I grew up in Montgomery. Neither of my parents went to college, and my mom's a flight attendant, so I was like, 'okay, I'm probably going to go out of state here.' My mom can fly and see me wherever I go! But no, I was lucky enough to have a lot of opportunities to go see different schools, and I just fell in love with Aggieland. I love the culture here, the family atmosphere, and it's only an hour away from home, so that's nice. Coach Evans is great. She's a big part of why I'm here.

You made it to State in high school?

We went one year. Gosh, we had a great team my senior year, a lot of great seniors going to different schools. We lost by one run, and it was actually the day of my high school graduation. After we lost, we had to do a graduation ceremony on the field with tears and eye-black and sweat, and it was on the t.u. field, so it was okay. It was mixed emotions.

In high school, did you catch?

I was a catcher, yeah! I love catching. Coach recruited me from my select team, and my freshman year, whenever I tried out and made my select team, my coach said, "You will never bat right-handed for me and you will never catch for me." So I was like, 'okay, let's think about this for a second.' But this coach had put all of his girls to college and knew what he was doing, so we were like, 'okay, we trust you.' I still caught in high school, though; I loved it and kind of got the outfield thing in select ball, and that's where coach recruited me.

Are you mostly the designated player then?

Pretty much. Last year there wasn't really a spot for me in the field. We are an upperclassmen-based team. Coach just gave me some opportunities our first year at UCLA, and I kind of capitalized on them. She really didn't have a choice, I guess, but to put me in the lineup and find a spot!

Reading your other stats, it says you led the team in batting average, runs, RBI's, homeruns, extra base hits, on base, and slugging percentage. Is that right?

I guess that's right! Numbers don't lie!



And then you were just second in hits.
Second in hits, yeah!

That's awesome!

Yeah, I had high expectations for myself my freshman year. All of us come from great high school backgrounds where, obviously, we are at the top of our game at our high schools and select teams. But I did have high expectations for myself here and didn't want to let myself, my family, and all my people down. It's the same game. Same game I've been playing for a while now.

Tell me about this year so far.

I'm kind of off to a slow start this year. Not bad, just kind of taking a while to get back in it. Eight seniors, we are loaded. I have high hopes. You know, last year we were 19-0 to start off with. So, I think we kind of peaked early last year and kind of fell a little when we got into conference. Hopefully, we will peak at a little better time this year.

Do you like the chemistry of this year's team?

Oh my goodness, it is great! So great! I've played with a bunch of teams before, and girls will be girls, but no. Everybody gets along and, of course, we all have our days, but we know how to handle each other, and the chemistry is unreal this year.

Tell me your favorite moment so far playing for the Aggies.
That would be at regionals against Baylor last year. We were three runs down; Amber was on, Emily was on, and I came up and hit a homerun to tie it, and then Nic was right behind me with the walk-off! So that was pretty cool.

Is it kind of cool that we are still playing Baylor? In the regional area, once it gets to post-season, there's a good chance that we're going to play them, right?

Yeah! Last year I kept saying all year that we are going to play Baylor or Texas within the regional. I think we are good 'cause we have a lot of competition in the SEC to get us ready for that.

What was your favorite place that you traveled to in the SEC last year?

I liked Tennessee. Downtime was cool, cool area. It was real friendly, kind of reminded me of A&M. Just the culture of the university and the southern feel. Feels cool.

Who do you like to hang out with on the team when you're

not playing softball?

Katie Marks and I are really close. We played together before she came here. It was between 8th and 9th grade. We are roommates and just hang out a lot.

Is there a place that you're looking forward to playing this year on the road?

I don't know. My two highlights have been California, which we have already been to. Santa Barbara was nice, on the water. Really cool town. I've been to Southern Cal a lot, but I've never been to Santa Barbara, so that was really neat. Palm Springs was nice! It was dry and my hair stayed! We've had fun trips. They treat us well.

What is your favorite tradition of Texas A&M and your favorite on the softball field?

I think it's the 12th Man. You know, going to the football games, it is just a culture that you cannot find anywhere else. We have the Sugar Daddies here, which is our version of the yell leaders. They keep us in the game, and we keep them in the game. So it's a good feeling with the 12th Man behind your back.

Can you hear comments from in the stands?

From the Sugar Daddies? Definitely! We laugh with them! We feel bad for the teams that we are playing. But they are great!

Would you consider the softball atmosphere here different from the other SEC teams?

Without a doubt! Yeah. I'd put our field against anybody; our 12th Man, oh yeah. People hate to come here.

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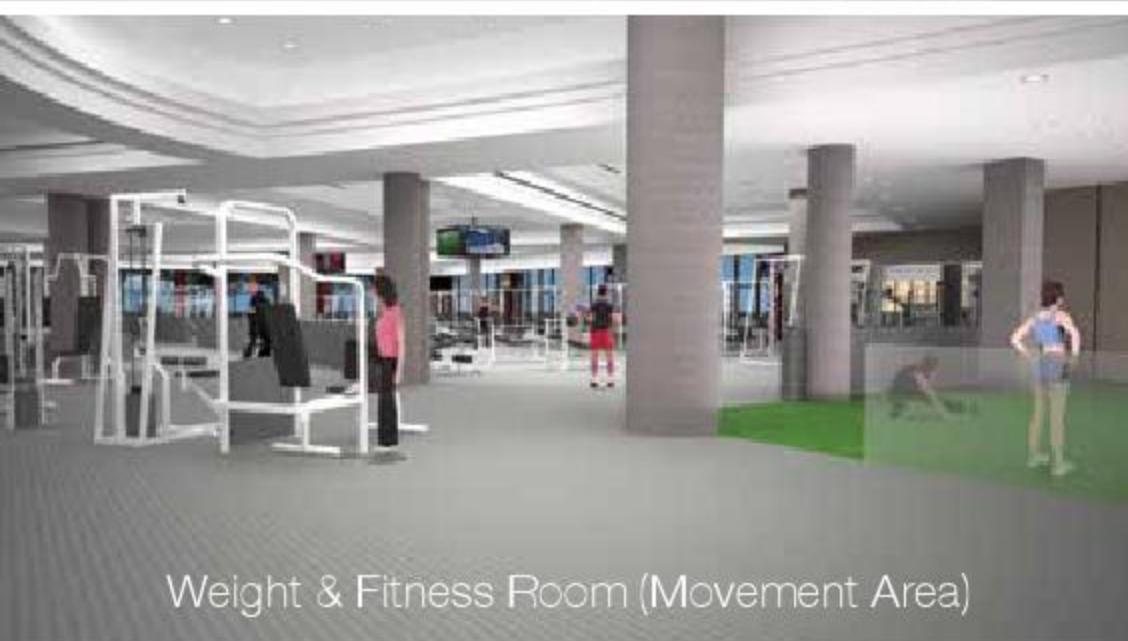
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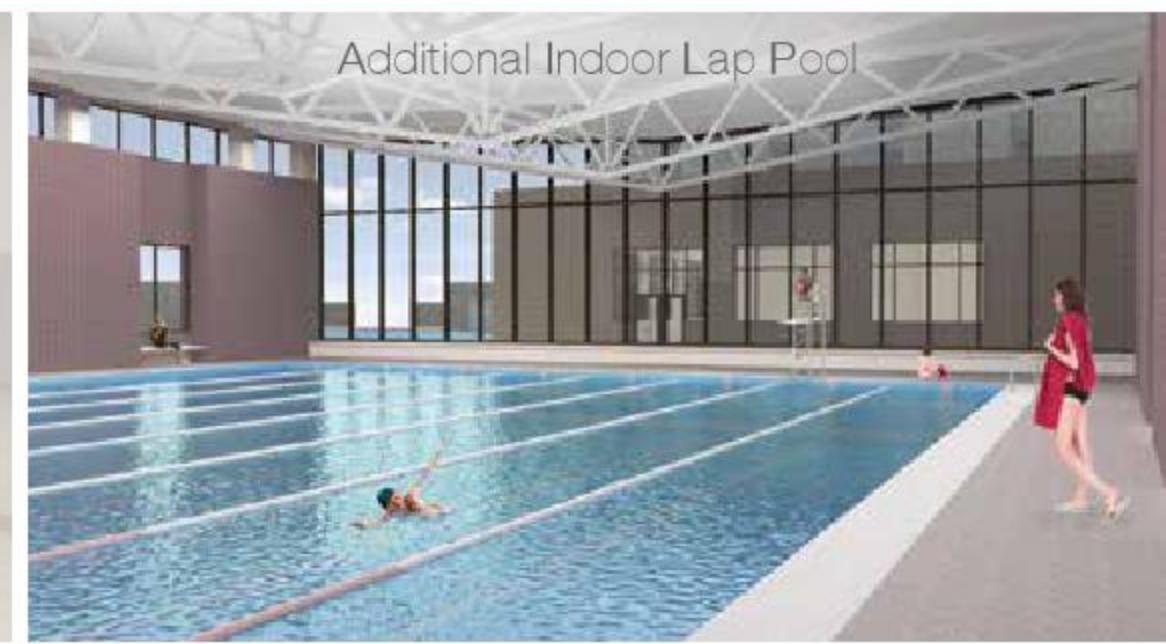
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Baseball

BY ROB HAVENS '88



America's favorite pastime has always been baseball. Aggie baseball at Olsen is truly a unique experience, even for the most die-hard of baseball fans. But, did you know there is another Aggie

baseball team? The A&M Club baseball team with the Sport Clubs Association has one of the most talented groups of players in the country. In fact, they are the nationally ranked number one pre-season team this season.

The club started in '99 and has attracted players that have played baseball their entire lives and want to keep playing. According to club president Austin Bear, it's a great way to meet new people and develop lifelong friends. Bear was a transfer student and had played since he was a kid; he decided to join the team to compete and meet new people.

The team consists of 27 players and is filled with talent. The ace on the pitching staff is David Williams, while Vaughn Miller leads the team at the plate. The club practices three times per week and is striving for a return trip to the World Series in May, after having made it to the tournament last year.

Bear tells AI that the team's main conference rival is UT, but their main rival overall is Texas Tech. In the fall, the team made it to the semi-final game of the

Wood Wars Tournament in McKinney, Texas. The team is working hard to meet their goals this season. Austin says the most important trait that makes a good baseball player is attitude. "There are many great skill players, but if they do not have the right attitude, they are hard to coach and do not get along with other team members."

The camaraderie the players develop during practice and on road trips has created memories that Bear will remember forever. He said the trip to Florida last year was so much fun and that the stories and funny things that happened are memories he will keep with him for the rest of his life. Bear describes how the team will take a group of new players that just made the team, and a week later they are already talking about rooming together. This proves once again that baseball is still America's favorite pastime, bringing friends and families together since the game first started.

The team has a few donors and also receives financial assistance from the Department of Recreational Sports.

Judo

BY ROB HAVENS '88

Judo was created in Japan as a modern martial art, combat and Olympic sport in 1882. In competition, the competitive elements consist of throwing or taking down your opponent, immobilizing or subduing them with a pin, or causing them to submit using a joint lock or choke.

We asked club president Ryan Wenzel about the Judo Club here at A&M. Wenzel, who started with the club the summer prior to his freshman year, says, "The club is an amazing collection of individuals. We have also become friends and socialize on and off campus. When an individual joins this club, they also become a member of a tightly knit group of friends."

The team consists of over twenty-five members. Bob Perez and Dan Gomez serve as coaches and are always there to provide guidance. Cory Klemashevich is an expert in ground techniques, while Arash Pourabib is an expert in standing

techniques. Nathan Westbrook brings ten years of experience to the team and is also the former president of the club. Alexandra Escobedo and Carlos Perez are club officers that are instrumental in making events possible.

The team practices three days per week. Ryan told AI that most new members are also new to the sport, although there are some who may have participated in another martial art when they were younger. Wenzel says, "Judo provides an exotic experience. In order to become a great judo member, an individual must be patient and have a desire to learn. Judo requires individuals to use precise movements in order to execute a throw. In order to perform these moves correctly, an individual must be willing to spend a great deal of time learning proper techniques."

The club has hosted the Texas Collegiate Championship for the past fourteen years, and this year Texas A&M hosted the largest National Collegiate Judo Championship since 1998. The club also competes in tournaments in other locations. We asked Wenzel about

his favorite experience traveling with the team, to which he replied, "When traveling to tournaments with team members, there is great camaraderie and the knowledge that whatever challenges are ahead, you will not be facing them alone."

The Judo Club has a scholarship endowment that provides financial aid to members of the team. Donations from former members and others provide funding for this scholarship endowment. To learn more about sport club endowments, visit recsports.tamu.edu/development/giving_back.stm.



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